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AMUSEMENT OF CONVALESCENT CHILDREN *

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IN private nursing there are so many things to be learned that cannot be found in any text-book, that never were taught in any training school, and that can be learned only in that hard school from which one never graduates—experience. I have merely written down a few of the things I have learned in that school and found helpful, hoping that among these there may be some points beneficial to some of you who have not spent as many years in the sick-room as I have.

If our duties were entirely confined to bodily care, it would not be such a difficult matter to give baths, or ice packs, or to irrigate wounds, or to perform any of those tangible duties which our training has taught us to do skilfully and easily. We can answer the call to such a patient with confidence in our ability to meet the exigencies of the case. But what makes us quake and dread the start, is a call where the duties are vague and intangible, and the demands upon the nurse not according to any rule or precedent. In no other phase of our work is it more necessary to have ability and accomplishments along other lines, and to have the “wonderful resource and sagacity” Kipling tells of, than in the care of sick children. From the time they are old enough to talk and be talked to until they are—well, sometimes until they are grandparents—it requires much skill and patience to amuse them as they travel that tedious road we call convalescence.

Of course the fundamental reason of our presence with the child is to care for the body, but our duties by no means end there, for to cure the body in the quickest and best way is to keep the mind contented and occupied. I am not speaking of the desperately sick child of course, but one strong enough to be amused though confined to bed or perhaps only the room, for I have spent many weeks with children in quarantine, when they were able to be about the room some time before the quarantine was raised, and you probably have had like experiences. On such cases, your capacity as a story-teller, an artist, and an actor will surely be tested, and your audience will judge you, though not at all critically, and very partially. You may understand the funda-

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mentals of anatomy and the elements of chemistry and be able to tell all about the period of incubation and desquamation and the etiology of the case, but your ten-year-old boy will have much more admiration for you if you can tell how Ethan Allen captured Ticonderoga and what happened to Robert Fulton on his trial trip up the Hudson.

In caring for children, sick or well, one needs to exercise a vivid imagination. The average child is about four-fifths imagination and the other fifth motion (or you may reverse the ratio), and you must be able to encourage and understand these flights of fancy if you are to be a real companion to the child. Then, too, you will find you can use this lively imagination to bring about desired ends. Some little strategy in dealing with disagreeable tasks or nauseous medicines will accomplish wonders when commands or coaxings may fail. I remember one little girl whose daily cross was the combing of her long, fine, tangly hair. One day I happily hit upon the scheme of giving each tangle a name and making some remark to it, usually a reprimand or some duty to perform at some distant place. We had the whole family from Grandfather Tangle to small Tommy, who appeared many times and had to be sent away each time to finish his task. When I had finished, my little patient remarked regretfully, "Can't you find any more?" Thereafter the hair combing was dreaded by neither patient nor nurse. In one of the late magazines I found the following: "One of the best ways to get at a child and make him do what you wish done is through his dramatic instinct. I have yet to see the child who does not love to act a part. If the mother herself can enter into the play, using animals, inanimate objects, or imaginary characters as assistants, she can often make the child carry out her wishes before he realizes that he is being obedient." Those are excellent suggestions which we can easily adapt to our own needs.

When amusing young children, say those five years old or younger, if you are at all familiar with any of the kindergarten methods, you will find great help there. The arranging of bright colored papers, stringing of beads, modelling clay, and tracing cards are all very amusing. Materials for these things can be purchased at any of the children's stores for a small amount. The building of fences, houses, and barns can be accomplished by the use of toothpicks and dried peas soaked in water. This makes a pleasing variety and is easily handled by the child in bed.

With young children, your fund of stories usually need not be a very large one, but your ability to repeat, and repeat, and repeat, and never forget how you told it before, will surely be tested. I have worn

threadbare many times the story of the Three Little Pigs, Goldenlocks, Little Red Riding Hood, and kindred literature, only to find that no matter how tiresome I found it, my little listener was as interested as the first time she heard it. Blowing soap bubbles is another way I have amused children. Unless the child is quite strong I have to do most of the blowing, but using an old flannel blanket for the bubbles to light and roll upon, adds to the safety and attractiveness of the game. The modern puzzle picture is very fascinating to children of all ages: the simpler ones for the young children, and the jig-saw puzzles for the older ones. The only difficulty is that they are rather expensive, and after they have been put together a few times they lose their charm. A good substitute is to have a picture, with which the child is not familiar, pasted over card-board and then cut into various irregular shapes.

One of the first and most resourceful sets of articles of amusement I use and one that fits a variety of ages, is an illustrated magazine, a pair of scissors, and a bottle of mucilage. Add to these a box of water-colors, and the amount of pleasure gained and the games that can be played are legion. No matter what the child's taste or temperament, many pleasant hours can be spent with this combination of tools. We usually have one section of the room decorated with pictures of people of interest or note, another place with colored prints, another with pictures of trees or flowers or birds, or whatever may appeal to this particular child. Another use of these articles is to make and furnish a house. This I do by taking large pieces of card-board. If I cannot get a large enough piece, I paste two together with a strip of cloth. We usually take one piece of card-board for each room of our house, and to make it more realistic, cover the card-board with appropriate wall paper. Then we cut out pictures of furniture and articles of apparel and paste in their proper places. For instance, the high grade furniture and fine pictures are arranged in order upon the card-board we are transforming into a parlor. Bookcases, a fire-place, and easy chairs are arranged in our library; and the cupboard, range and ice box, with all perquisites, require much time and attention. Let the child use his own taste about the arrangements. These plans, with variations and improvements, which the quick imagination of the child will suggest, such perhaps as creating a family and then wardrobes, will make many hours pass pleasantly for the little prisoner. Making a circus was done on the same plan. A large card-board was used and we found a ring master, a clown, and a trick dog for the centre. In a circle around, we pasted faces one above another, which represented the crowds witness-

ing the performance. Around the edge of the card-board we placed the wild animals, usually only parts of animals (but one must not be too particular), over which we pasted very narrow strips of black paper to represent the bars of the cages. Of course we had the circus parade with the elephants and horseback riders in advance, and an improvised calliope bringing up the rear. I have also made scrap-books by using bright colored book muslin or cheap cambric, stitching the leaves together at the back. Two or three of these can be made, each having its own special use. During one long tedious quarantine, we were told that the walls of the room were to be redecorated as soon as we were out. My patient was able to walk about the room, and she spent many happy hours pasting and arranging pictures on the wall paper. I presume most of the attractiveness of the task was the fact that it was usually forbidden. So much for pictures and paste.

A box of water-colors adds much to many different games, and many schemes will reveal themselves as you use the brush. It will add to the attractiveness of the paper doll wardrobes, including all the sisters and the cousins and the aunts, and is a pleasant task for little fingers. For little girls, it is well to spend some time in sewing. Fancy work and making doll clothes are usually enjoyed—and I hope the rest of you who have to care for little girls do not find the making of dolls' wardrobes as irksome as I do.

Most children are interested and quite adept at games. If they do not already know, they can easily learn dominoes, checkers, or parchesi. I have found a powerful ally in parchesi. Children usually have some games of their own they are interested in and eager to teach to others. I have often played imaginary "I spy," in which we took turns at imagining ourselves in some impossible place and the other would ask questions until able to guess where. This is an excellent twilight game.

It is usually harder to keep a boy interested in bedside games than a girl. He is apt to be more restless and impatient at being confined. Story telling is a great asset in trying to amuse him. If your fund of stories is rather low, let me warn you, if you are going to care for sick children, you had better practise the story telling art. Boys usually like stories of adventure and history, even if they care for none other. I am afraid my stock of adventurous stories is rather limited, but I have quite a supply of historical incidents I find helpful. Stories of colonial and revolutionary times and Civil War stories are instructive and usually enjoyed. The story of the Pilgrim Fathers, Captain John Smith, Israel Putnam, and their contemporaries are always appreciated, providing my patient cannot tell them better than I can.

Let me make a suggestion: If you want some good stories, especially for boys, that include history, adventure, and the teaching of high principles, read up some of your Bible stories and add to your repertory. All modern fiction cannot produce stories so thrilling, nor can your imagination conjure one as wonderful. For instance, show the boy in his geography the map of western Asia and the relative situation of Jerusalem and Babylon. Describe the cities, the temple at Jerusalem, and the hanging gardens of Babylon, and tell of the captivity of the tribes of Judea by the Assyrians. Tell how the boy Daniel, who was taken a captive from Jerusalem, was shown special favor but refused to eat the meat or drink the wine from the king's table because he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself, and how he distinguished himself by his fidelity to his ancestral faith. Then tell of the changeless laws of the Medes and the Persians. (If you have forgotten, you will find it all in your ancient histories.) How Daniel defied one of those laws and how the reluctant king was obliged, according to the law that altereth not, to have Daniel cast into the den of lions. Then tell how the king passed the night; enlarge upon it if you like, and repeat the conversation between the captive and the king the next morning, and you will have the most uneasy boy interested and will be sowing seeds of courage and strict adherence to principles as well, and I doubt not but he will try to be a Daniel the next time you have a hard or disagreeable task for him.

Another story boys always like is the story of Joseph, from the time he was sent forth into the fields to see whether it be well with his brethren, through his brothers' treachery, his slavery, imprisonment, through the incidents which lead to kingly favor and governorship of the land of Egypt. And when you describe the scenes where his brothers came down to buy corn of him and knew him not, you will have a breathless audience if you can tell it anywhere nearly as well as it is told in Genesis. There are any amount of stories in the Old Testament of adventure and war that will interest boys and instruct them. I only referred to these as an illustration. Incidentally, you may be instilling a desire for Biblical knowledge in the young mind.

For a child old enough to be read to, there is no end of books. Usually he has many in his own library that he is anxious to hear, or there is some class of books he prefers. The Wizard of Oz is a universal favorite. Some one has called it the "Dickens of children's literature," and nine out of ten children will mention it as a favorite. I have found that "Hiawatha" appeals to even quite small children, probably owing more to the peculiar rhythm than to an understanding of the wonderful

exploits. "Rip Van Winkle" is easy to read and much appreciated. Kipling's *Jungle Book* and "Just So" stories, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Laura Richards, Annie Johnston, Joel Chandler Harris, and many others furnish us good children's stories. Louisa Alcott's stories frequently have such a pathetic strain that they are too much for the little hearts. The same reason usually bars Ernest Seton Thomson's stories, too.

Finding stories to read aloud is usually an easy task; one of the easiest in the care of children. It is the games and the schemes and the flights of fancy that are constantly demanded of you that make you so weary and exhausted when night comes. But it is a wholesome weariness and you, too, have gained from the day's experience. It is a privilege to be able to come into close touch with the refreshing nature of a wholesome child, and when you have spent some weeks with one of the little ones, you will find that the child is not the only one who has derived benefit from the companionship.

NURSING IN NERVOUS DISEASES

SECOND PAPER

SOME SPECIAL PHASES

By PEARCE BAILEY, M.D.,

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It is commonly said that the care of nervous patients is a very exacting business, that nurses are so tried and worried by the vagaries of their charges that they, too, soon become upset and nervous and are only too glad to seek some other means to employ their energy. This is only partly true. It is true if a nurse enters into sympathetic relations with neurotic people and is with them constantly, she may give out more of her own energy than she can afford to. But this need not happen; for if a nurse in this branch of her profession exercises the same system, the same objectivity, the same impersonal tone as she does in other diseases, she will find that nursing here is no more trying than elsewhere; in fact, my experience is that well trained nurses in nervous diseases are healthier and less neurotic than others. And, once the trick how to get along with nervous patients is learned, nurses will soon be repaid for what they give out by what they gain, for these patients are apt to be extremely intelligent, of varied interests, and of that charm which commonly goes with the name of the artistic temperament.